



# News

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## **PEORIA HIGH STUDENT WINS ARIZONA WILDLIFE ART COMPETITION**

Peoria High School senior Kevin Birch's, 17, rendition of a mallard rising from a pond at sunrise captured viewers, judges and the Best of Show award at the 2003 Arizona Junior Duck Stamp Competition. The El Mirage resident's color pencil artwork makes him eligible for a \$4000 scholarship and will represent Arizona at the national competition in Washington D.C.

Age category winners and placers came from schools in Tucson, Altar Valley, Phoenix, Scottsdale, Peoria, Avondale and Gilbert. First through third place artwork will be on tour in Arizona throughout the year to promote the competition and to enhance viewers' appreciation of wildlife, habitat, and the arts. First-place artwork can be seen at <http://arizonaes.fws.gov>.

"The spirit, creativity, and talent of each of the entrants was amazing," said competition coordinator Irma Juneau of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "We are anxious to assemble the winning pieces into a traveling exhibit – art and wildlife enthusiasts will be delighted and impressed to see it when it comes to town." Annually, Arizona Public Service, Sky Harbor Airport, Arizona's National Wildlife Refuges and schools host the exhibit. Galleries, schools and businesses interested in displaying the collection should contact the Fish and Wildlife Service to be added to the exhibition schedule.

The Arizona Junior Duck Stamp Program, managed by the Service, is a conservation program designed to teach students about waterfowl and their habitat through an art and science-based curriculum. The program is available both to school children in grades K-12 and to home school students. The program, modeled after the Federal Duck Stamp Program, gives students an opportunity to create a design for a stamp. Federal Duck Stamps are sought-after and collected by conservationists, waterfowl hunters, and stamp collectors, with stamp sales proceeds going to waterfowl and wetland conservation projects.

The judging event was hosted by The Phoenix Zoo. Judges included Service biologist Frank Baucom, Arizona Game and Fish Department's Mike Rabe, Arizona Highways photo editor Peter Ensenger, and renowned Arizona wildlife artists Craig Chepley and Nanci Harlin.

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**EDITOR'S NOTE** - Electronic images of winning art are post on the internet at <http://arizonaes.fws.gov> Media and readers can contact Irma Juneau for a preliminary exhibit schedule and to request participation.